

TREK PROJECT 1 MADONE 6.9

The Madone models come in a variety of carbon constructions. I've previously ridden the Madone OCLV Black, which uses intermediate modulus carbon fiber, with the result being a slightly heavier frame. My Project One 6.9 frame was constructed from what Trek calls OCLV Red, which uses a higher percentage of high modulus carbon fiber, which translates into a lighter frame. The ride qualities between the two are unperceivable. What is noticeable is the weight reduction from the Black to the Red. My Bontrager PowerTap wheels were kind of beefy, but if you were to slap some light weight hoops on this rig expect it to drop into the low 15-pound range.

I chose the Pro Fit, which is a traditional head tube and stem length geometry. The Madone is also available in the Performance fit which has a 30mm taller head tube and 1 cm shorter stem for a more upright, comfortable ride. For the women there is the WSD Fit which uses the Performance Fit head tube height but with specific reach and stem length. While head tube height may differ between the Pro and the Performance, the geometry is the same, so the bike won't handle differently between the two models.

Trek has been producing OCLV carbon fiber in Wisconsin for 17 years, so yeah, they know what they are doing. The immediate deviation of the Madone that Armstrong rode is the use of a mast, but it's not a mast that you have to cut. In fact, Trek calls it a seat cap which the seat post slides over. So put away the hacksaw and measuring tape, you won't need those. The seat cap allows for 100mm of up and down adjustment, so no worries about finding that sweet spot. The chain stays are also asymmetrically-designed separately to handle the stress forces that pass through. Good to know as you power out of the saddle. And another area of the frame designed to handle stress is the

90mm wide bottom bracket. This wider bottom bracket allows the downtube and chainstays to have a bigger cross section which again translates to a stiffer frame. Also super-sized to stiffen the ride is the bottom of the headtube which is enlarged to 1.5 inches. As I've mentioned before in other reviews, carbon fiber is a strand that works best when flowing in a straight line. The Race XXX Lite fork helps keep the carbon fiber flow uninterrupted, producing a strong fork. The actual physical construction of the frame is lugs and tubing which snap together. Trek calls this OCLV Net Molding which creates a perfect fit and alignment. There is no wrapping of the tubes at junctions which Trek says creates inconsistent ride qualities.

From a cosmetic standpoint, the semi-compact frame design and unique shaped tubes give the bike a striking look. The color scheme and design is all me, so naturally I love it!


HOW DOES IT FEEL?

I hadn't seen my Project One Madone 6.9 Pro since participating in the death march called the E'tape (September issue). I opened the box and there the Madone was, still with some French dirt on the saddle. Next thing I knew I woke up under my desk, curled up in a fetal position with Creative Director Schamber gently shaking me. "You dropped to the floor and started mumbling, 'E'tape, E'tape, so cold, so cold.'" Yes the E'tape has scared me for life.

Once the shock of seeing the Madone was gone, I quickly mounted the wheels to the frame, positioned the handlebars to my liking and rolled out the office. I did a lot of climbing in France, but because of the constant rain, I didn't feel confident to bomb down the side of the mountain. Now in the heat of L.A. I felt confident enough to rail the downhill turns. The neutral handling of the Madone made my sudden dips and turns feel

surefooted. In a sprint the bike shot forward without any wasted side to side motion. The 90mm wide bottom bracket seemed to do the job of transferring the power to the pedals. I've ridden stiffer bikes, but the Madone seemed to be stiff enough for what I could unleash on it. The engineers at Trek wanted to design a neutral handling bike and that's was how this bike felt. There were no surprises and it did everything I asked for it to do: diving into turns without drifting, smooth climbing and descending with confidence, all done well. After getting in some quick miles I could see the Armstrong influence on this bike. The Madone is meant to be ridden mile after mile without constantly keeping the bike in check. A nervous bike is great for a short criterium when you need to thread the needle, but rolling along in the peloton you want something that is not going to aggressively dive from one side of the road to the next at the slightest input. The Pro Fit geometry is race proven and a look at the Astana's results this year backs that up.

LAST CALL

The Project One Madone is the bike that will set you apart from the pack. Pick your components, choose your color scheme, decide on the design and be assured that the chances of rolling up next to someone with that exact scheme is going to be few and far between. For the racer, the Madone 6.9 fits the bill. It is light weight, reacts how you want it to and is more than ready for hours of tarmac time. For the guy pounding out the miles and enjoys posting up at the after-ride coffee shop this will make you the cool guy in the group. So go to the Project One web site and start building your ultimate ride. 

ANGLES

Measurements in centimeters [TT= top tube; SA= seat angle; HA= head angle]

SIZE	50	52	54	56	58	60	62
TT	51.8	53	53.9	55.7	57.2	58.6	59.7
SA	75.1°	74.7°	74.2°	73.6°	73.1°	72.8°	72.5°
HA	72.1°	72.8°	73°	73.5°	73.8°	73.9°	73.9°



THE LOW DOWN

PRICE: Varies [depending on package selected]
 WEIGHT: 16.2lbs. [no pedals]
 SIZES: 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60, 62cm
 COLOR: Custom [black & red with flames shown]
 CONTACT: projectone.trekbikes.com

CHASSIS

FRAME: Red high modulus
 FORK: Race XXX Lite carbon fiber w/carbon steerer

WHEELS

WHEELSET: Bontrager PowerTap
 TIRES: Bontrager Race XXX Lite

COCKPIT

BRAKE LEVERS: SRAM Red
 BRAKES: SRAM Red
 HANDLEBAR: Bontrager Race XXX Lite
 HEADSET: Cane Creek
 SADDLE: Bontrager InForm
 SEATPOST: Seat cap
 SHIFTERS: SRAM Red
 STEM: Bontrager Race XXX Lite Carbon

DRIVETRAIN

BOTTOM BRACKET: SRAM Red
 CASSETTE: SRAM Red
 CHAIN: Shimano Dura-Ace
 CRANKS: SRAM Red
 DERAILLEURS F/R: SRAM Red